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MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER  
FROM: AL HAIG  
SUBJECT: CIA Analysis of North Vietnamese  
Troop Buildup in Area of DMZ

At Tab B is the analysis you requested from the CIA based on the President's request of April 3. This request may have been generated by the New York Times article of April 3 written by Tad Szulc (Tab C).

At Tab A is a memorandum from you to the President summarizing the CIA memorandum which points out that press reports of a buildup of North Vietnamese regulars above the DMZ and significant troop movements elsewhere are much overdrawn.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

NSA review completed

MORI/CDF per C03419666

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

APR 6 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER (S1222) EK

SUBJECT: North Vietnamese Troop Movements  
in and around the DMZ

Pursuant to your request CIA has prepared an analysis of recent North Vietnamese troop movements above the DMZ and elsewhere in Indochina. They now suggest that recent press reports to this effect are much overdrawn. The following specific points are highlighted:

- Hanoi has strengthened its military forces somewhat in the southern part of North Vietnam in recent weeks. However, associated moves have been mainly for air defense and to a much lesser extent ground units.
- There have been some troop movements across the DMZ into northern South Vietnam, but not enough to alter substantially the character of the Communist force structure there.
- It is now obvious that Hanoi chose not to pursue the allies deep into South Vietnam following Lam Son 719 and its forces have now largely disengaged and regrouped miles inside Laos.
- Although there have been some North Vietnamese troop movements elsewhere in Indochina during the past six months, none of the recent moves have altered the enemy threat significantly.
- It is likely that some continuation of the heavier fighting like that which recently occurred around Danang and in the western highlands will continue in part because Hanoi is bent on flexing its military muscle in an effort to dispel the idea that Lam Son lessened their capabilities, but also

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because this is the time of year in which such attacks usually occur.

- The CIA does not see any new North Vietnamese deployments that would suggest the enemy is prepared for a sustained offensive of any kind.

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**Press Reports of North Vietnamese  
Troop Movements**

1. We believe that recent press reports of a continuing buildup of North Vietnamese regulars above the DMZ and of significant troop moves elsewhere in Indochina are much overdrawn. Hanoi has strengthened its military forces somewhat in the southern part of North Vietnam in recent weeks. The reinforcements are not extraordinary, however, and are intended mainly for air defense and to a lesser extent for ground units. Elements comprising less than half of the 271st Infantry Regiment have moved into Quang Binh Province within the last week or so, but the balance of the regiment remains to the north in Nghe An Province. We have seen no other troop moves of consequence into Quang Binh for several weeks.

2. There have been some recent troop movements across the DMZ into northern South Vietnam, but not enough to alter substantially the character of the Communist force structure there. The fresh deployments add elements from an infantry and an antiaircraft regiment to the roughly four regiments of infantry and artillery now harassing allied forces along Route 9. We believe there are now on the order of 26,000 Communist combat troops in northern South Vietnam; around 18,000 of them are in the northern two provinces.

3. The picture regarding future deployments of the enemy forces in the Lam Son area of eastern Laos is mixed. Clearly, Hanoi chose not to pursue the allies deep into South Vietnam and its forces have disengaged and regrouped several miles inside Laos. Some appear to be headed back to southern North Vietnam; others seem ready to set out for their normal areas of operation in western Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces; still others are staying on in the Lam Son area to help out with logistics movements and local security.

4. Elsewhere in Indochina there have been many significant troop movements during the past six months, but none in recent weeks has altered the enemy threat significantly. We are inclined to think that a continuation of heavier fighting like that which recently occurred around Da Nang and in the western highlands is likely in several parts

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of Indochina in the weeks ahead, in part because Hanoi is bent on flexing its military muscles in an effort to dispel the idea that Communist capabilities were undercut by the Lam Son operation, but also because it is the time of year this usually happens. We do not, however, see any new North Vietnamese deployments that suggest the enemy is preparing for a sustained offensive of any kind.

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# Continued Enemy Build-Up Above DMZ Reported

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 3

Intelligence reports reaching Washington indicate a continuing North Vietnamese build-up north of the demilitarized zone and new enemy troop movements in Laos, Cambodia and the northern part of South Vietnam.

In the light of these reports, American intelligence specialists said today that the North Vietnamese retained the capability of maintaining—at least until the dry season ends next month—hit-and-run operations throughout Indochina.

The White House and the Defense Department interpret these recent attacks as an attempt to disguise losses suffered during the South Vietnamese incursion into Laos. But civilian intelligence specialists are inclined to regard the hit-and-run operations as designed to keep the Saigon Government and the United States off balance throughout Indochina.

## Disagreement on Damage

At the root of this difference of interpretation is a disagreement on the damage suffered by the North Vietnamese in Laos.

The White House and the military believe that the losses were considerable and that Hanoi's ability to conduct successful operations is limited to raids of primarily psychological impact.

The civilian intelligence experts tend to suspect that

North Vietnamese capabilities are again being underestimated, although none of the intelligence men expect major offensives.

They say that Hanoi is moving some of its 100,000 troops in North Vietnam closer to the DMZ—which straddles the border—and into the zone, that possibly as many as 50,000 North Vietnamese regulars remain in northern South Vietnam and that southbound traffic has resumed to some extent over the Laotian supply trails.

## New Political Effort

At the same time, they reported, North Vietnam is engaged in a major new effort to streamline its political and economic institutions as a part of what American analysts regard as plans for an indefinite pursuit of the war.

Last January, for example, the Central Committee of the North Vietnamese Workers' (Communist) party held its first publicly announced full meeting since 1964 and stressed that the war still took priority over economic development. American intelligence sources said this session might have been called in anticipation of the South Vietnamese thrust into Laos.

On April 11, North Vietnam will elect members of the National Assembly for the first time since 1964, three years behind schedule. The decision to hold the elections was announced immediately after the Laos incursion, and analysts here believe that the voting for the single list of candidates is

intended to emphasize North Vietnamese political unity.

Yesterday, the Hanoi radio announced the establishment of a high-level department to supervise agriculture and presumably to push for higher rice production. The 1970 harvest was one of the biggest in years, but North Vietnam is hoping for self-sufficiency in food.

The new disagreement over North Vietnamese plans seemed to add to the differences in the Administration over North Vietnamese intentions and capabilities.

Intelligence officials outside the White House now say that United States and South Vietnamese military intelligence may have been faulty in underestimating North Vietnam's capacity to respond to the drive into Laos, which began Feb. 8.

The officials have acknowledged in private conversation that the Laos operation was begun without an agreed intelligence estimate by United States intelligence agencies community and that "devil's advocate" arguments by the State Department and even some officials of the Central Intelligence Agency were largely disregarded.

Discussing the present efforts to assess North Vietnamese plans, many officials said that disagreements persist along the same lines, with the White House and the Defense Department reportedly inclined to take the optimistic view.

This view, some officials

suggested privately, may relate to the Administration's position that the Laos campaign hurt the enemy badly and that, therefore, it is capable only of harassment.

President Nixon is expected to touch on these points in his speech to the nation next Wednesday, when he is to announce new withdrawals of American forces from South Vietnam.

Intelligence officials noted, however, that North Vietnam massed considerable forces above the demilitarized zone last January, presumably in anticipation of the offensive in Laos, and had strengthened its position inside the zone.

The intelligence specialists also said that North Vietnam might be engaged, through its hit-and-run attacks, in a long-range effort to interfere as much as possible with the pacification programs in South Vietnam before the South Vietnamese parliamentary elections next August and the presidential elections next October.

The enemy attacks have been directed against civilian, as well as military targets, including a district capital, Ducduc, which was burned earlier this week.

## Jakarta Curbs Diplomats

JAKARTA, Indonesia, April 3 (Reuters)—The Government has barred all foreign diplomats from travel in Indonesia until after the general election in July.

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